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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/502,450	01/13/2005	Johannes de Graauw	7389/84086	3682

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FITCH, EVEN, TABIN & FLANNERY
P. O. BOX 18415
WASHINGTON, DC 20036

EXAMINER

MANOHARAN, VIRGINIA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1797

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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05/14/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary**Application No.**

10/502,450

Applicant(s)

DE GRAAUW ET AL.

Examiner

Virginia Manoharan

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 July 2006.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 July 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/CIS)
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 07/23/04.

DETAILED ACTION

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

The specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors, e.g., typographical, grammar, idiomatic, syntax and etc. Applicants' cooperations are requested in correcting any errors of which applicants may become aware in the specification.

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because of the inclusion of legal phraseology often used in patent claims such as "comprising" in lines 1 and 4. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) and/or reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description: the claimed structures e.g., distillation column, inner and outer shell and etc., not provided with reference numerals in the drawings nor in the specification.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of

any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

- a). The claims, as framed, are functional to the point of being indefinite inasmuch as the process steps languages and the functional languages make the actual structure vague and the true structural limitations for apparatus claims, are difficult to determine. Just as an example: the term "providing" in claim 1 does not recite positively the device just that it is provided. [The structure which goes to make up the device must be clearly and positively specified. The structure must be organized and correlated in such a manner as to present a complete operative device].
- b). The terms "the said", numerous recited in the claims, is redundant.
- c). The preamble of claim 1 recites "A heat integrated distillation column", however the body of the claim does not mention any distillation column. See also claim 18.
- d). The inconsistent used of terminology in the claims is improper. For examples:
 - 1). The "at least one first volume", in claim 1, as opposed to "said first volume" in claim 4. See also claim 11.
 - 2). The "at least one second volume" in claim 1 as opposed to "said second volume" in claim 3.

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e). It is unclear whether “the volume with the highest temperature” and “the volume designed to have the lowest temperature” recited in claims 5 and 6 is the same or different from the first and the second volumes initially recited in claim 1. See also the claimed “volume of one section” and “volume of the other section” in claim 16.

f). Claim 7 is incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationship of the “vapour disengagement means” relative to the other structures, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections. See MPEP § 2172.01.

g). There are insufficient antecedent bases for the following limitations in the claims.

- 1). “the enriching section”, claims 9-11;
- 2). “the stripping section”, claims 9-11; and
- 3). “the downcomer”, claim 14.

h). Claim 20, as recited, is in improper Markush language.

--- Wherein R is A, B, or C ---;and

--- Wherein R is selected from a group consisting of A, B, and C--- would both constitute proper Markush languages.

Claims 7 is objected to because of typographical error such as “vapour” in claim 7 which should be –vapor—as the latter is the term normally used in the U.S.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Herron et al (5,592,832) .

It is noted at the outset that applicant's use of Jepson format is, in effect, an implied admission by applicant that the limitations recited in the preamble were known in the art, leaving for consideration only whether the improvement clause imparts patentability to the claims. However, Herron discloses the claimed "improvement comprising providing means having heat exchanging capacity extending through the said wall from said at least one first volume into said at least one second volume" as broadly claimed in claim 1. See e.g., Figs. 1-8, and col. 1, line 40 through cols. 2-6. The "whereby" clause in claim 1 such as "whereby the inside of the said heat exchanging means is in open fluid connection with the said first volume" does not define any element of an apparatus, and accordingly can not be distinguished from the prior art in the structural sense.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

a). Hugill discloses a system for stripping and rectifying a fluid mixture.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to V. Manoharan whose telephone number is (571) 272-1450.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Caldarola can be reached on (571) 272-1444.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Virginia Manoharan/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797